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ABSTRACT

This report describes current systems and procedures for certification in France. An introduction makes brief reference to the characteristics of the general and vocational training systems. Part 1 provides details of the respective powers of the various bodies and authorities involved in the establishment of certification procedures. It examines these areas: the certificates and diplomas established by the ministries, the qualifications issued by training bodies and approved by the Committee on the Approval of Technical Training Qualifications, and the qualifications recognized by the occupational sectors. Other sections address the extensive consultations that precede the establishment of diplomas and the validating authorities. Part 2 describes access to certificates and diplomas, including conditions for access and qualification profiles. It also discusses training establishments and forms of training, including training/work experience schemes, modular training and the credit units system, and distance learning. Part 3 describes assessment procedures and conditions for the issue of certificates and diplomas. It addresses the following topics: assessment procedures, assessment objectives, and organization of and responsibility for assessment; composition of the examining boards; and who issues certificates and diplomas in the various ministries. A conclusion highlights trends. Appendixes contain the number of certificates and diplomas issued by ministry, list of abbreviations, and six references. (YLB)

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Systems and procedures of certification of qualifications in France

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Systems and procedures for the certification of qualifications

National monographs

In the context of preparation by the social partners of a "joint opinion on occupational qualifications and certification" (adopted on 3 July 1992), the Centre has been asked to undertake comparative analysis of systems and procedures for certification currently being applied within the European Communities. The authors of the monographs on the national training systems, another area of CEDEFOP's work, and who are in an ideal position to acquire information, have for the most part been asked to carry out this work.

National reports have now been concluded in the original language and are currently being translated. We are pleased to present these in a new publication series

"CEDEFOP Panorama"

These may be obtained free of charge upon request from CEDEFOP.

In these publications the authors, after making brief reference to the characteristics of the general and vocational training systems in their countries, describe all aspects of how qualifications are certified:

- formulation and introduction of certificates, qualifications and diplomas: the relevant institutions, procedures, tripartite or joint consultation or decision-making commissions;
- access to qualifications: conditions, means, motives, channels;
- certification: aims, contents, means, procedures;
- usefulness, use, trends and problems.

To keep up to date with national situations which are in a constant state of flux, the Centre would be grateful for reader's comments.

Cross-reference reading of the twelve monographs to formulate a synthesis report and a summary table is being carried out by a European institute specialized in international comparison of education and vocational training systems.
This publication currently is being prepared.

Maria Pierret
July 1993

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INTRODUCTION

Training systems and qualification structures in France

1.1. Training levels in France

Historically, the definition of the respective levels of training originated during the preparatory work for the IVth Plan[1] in the early 1960s. The purpose was to classify the working population by training level, involving the definition of six levels corresponding to job requirements in the various occupational categories.

In 1969 the National Statistics Committee finalized a nomenclature of training levels, based on principles which still apply today.

These levels are as follows:

Level I: personnel holding jobs which normally require a training level higher than the Master's degree;

Level II: personnel holding jobs for which a training level corresponding to the first degree or Master's degree is normally required;

Level III: personnel holding jobs for which a training level corresponding to the Advanced Technician's Certificate, a diploma from the College of Technology or a certificate attesting to completion of the first stage of higher education is normally required;

Level IV: personnel holding Master Craftsmen's jobs or possessing qualifications of a level equivalent to the Technical Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate or Technician's Certificate;

Level V: personnel holding jobs for which a training level equivalent to the Vocational Studies Certificate (BEP) or Vocational Proficiency Certificate (CAP) is normally required.;

Level Va: personnel holding jobs requiring a short training course (up to one year), leading to the vocational education certificate or any other attestation of the same type.

It should be noted that in the French system, the hierarchy of training levels runs in the opposite direction to that adopted for the European Classification System.

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[1] Medium-term economic forecasts: the IVth Economic and Social Development Plan covered the period 1962-65.

1.2 The initial and continuing training systems

Initial training

Schooling is compulsory from age 6 to age 16; optional pre-school education is provided in nursery schools for children of from 2 to 5. Compulsory schooling comprises several stages:

- primary education, which is given in primary schools and generally lasts for five years;
- secondary education: on completion of their primary schooling all pupils go on to secondary school.

Tuition is given in two stages: an observation stage (first and second years of secondary education) and an assessment stage (third and fourth years).

Pupils enter the fourth year of lower secondary education through various channels during the assessment stage: the third and fourth year general or technical classes lead to the general, technical or vocational streams in upper secondary school, while the fourth year integration classes given access to vocational secondary school or apprenticeship.

The education given in lower secondary schools leads to the award of a national certificate ("Brevet").

Schooling is compulsory up to age 16.

Post-compulsory or upper secondary education is given in general, vocational or technical upper secondary schools.

The upper secondary schools receive lower secondary school leavers and prepare them, over three years, for the General or Technical Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificates or the Technician's Certificate.

Higher education is given in post-secondary classes and universities. Post-secondary classes are classes preparing students for access to the "Grandes Ecoles" (specialized institutions of higher education) and classes in the advanced technician's section of upper secondary school, which prepare Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate holders over two years for the Advanced Technician's Certificate.

Initial vocational training through apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a form of training combined with work experience aimed at providing young people with technical and vocational qualifications at various levels.

Theoretical training is given in apprentice training centres (as distinct from upper secondary schools), while practical training is given in firms. Apprenticeships are open to young people wed 16-25 who sign an apprentice contract (a special form of employment contract) with an employer. The duration of these contracts varies from one to three years according to the trade chosen.

Continuing training

The right of the individual to continuing vocational training is embodied in Section IX of the Labour Code; all persons engaged in an occupation, whether young people or adults, are therefore entitled to training. The provisions governing the training system are derived from joint intervention by the public authorities (legislation and ministerial orders) and the two sides of industry (in the context of collective bargaining).

The training system is characterized by the variety of means of access to training, depending on the status of the individual applicant. The various types of training provision available to the respective target groups at national level are briefly described below:

- workers in employment may seek training in the context of training measures aimed respectively at private and public-sector employees, local authority employees or the self-employed;

- firms' employees can seek training in the context of the firm's own training plan, the training leave system, support measures in cases of redundancies for economic reasons, or social advancement schemes.

Under Law n° 71/575 of 16 July 1971 all employers with more than ten workers must devote a percentage of their total gross wage bill to training[2].

Since 1992, this provision also applies to firms with less than 10 workers[3] and the self-employed[4]. A firm's training plan comprises the entire range of training courses approved by the employer in the context of the firm's objectives; the plan enables workers to attend training courses generally linked to their respective trades or functions; however, the courses may also have a general or technical content.

The training leave system enables all workers, whatever the size of their firm, to attend a training course of their choice in working time. Training leave may be used to follow a vocational training course if the worker desires to acquire, refresh or perfect knowledge and skills, gain access to a higher qualification level, change his occupation, prepare for an examination; courses of a cultural or social character may also be followed.

In the event of redundancies for economic reasons, support measures are brought into effect to enable the workers concerned to participate in retraining measures.

Public-sector and local authority employees may attend training courses organized or approved by their respective employers, or apply for training leave to attend courses of their choice in working time.

Self-employed workers may obtain training relating to their own occupation with the help of the

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2 On 1 January 1993 this figure stood at 1.5%.

3 0.15% of the annual gross wage bill.

4 0.15% of the social security contribution ceiling.

Training Insurance Funds for the Self-Employed, or they may follow courses approved by the authorities carrying entitlement to a flat-rate allowance.

Job-seekers are entitled to benefit from training measures organized by the public authorities. Some of these measures are accessible to all job-seekers, while others are aimed at particular categories, e.g. beneficiaries of the basic allowance under the unemployment insurance system, young people aged 16-25 seeking their first job and/or lacking vocational qualifications, the long-term unemployed and those in receipt of the minimum integration income benefit (RMI).

The Individual Training Allocation (CFI) was introduced in 1989. It was originally aimed at young people aged 16-25 who left school with no vocational qualifications, to enable them to obtain qualifications corresponding to Level V (Vocational Proficiency Certificate, Vocational Studies Certificate or the equivalent). Under this scheme, personalized training channels involving various different types of measures are accessible to young people: assessment reports, monitoring, preliminary training and training modules, and training periods in firms. The scheme was extended to job-seekers and adult workers in employment in 1992.

Other types of training courses unrelated to trainees' occupational activity may also be followed: these mainly concern "social advancement" courses which take the form of evening classes or distance learning courses.

The multiplicity of target groups and means of access to training in no sense runs counter to the principle of the right to training for all members of the working population.

Field covered by the study and details of the methodology employed

This study of the systems and procedures for the certification of qualifications and skills in France is confined to the field of technical and vocational training, no account being taken of qualifications above Level III (e.g. the Advanced Technician's Certificate or the University Diploma of Technology).

With the characteristics of the French system in mind, our study was centred on the various validating bodies, i.e. the ministries which issue qualifications: the Ministry of Education (which issues the great majority of certificates and diplomas), and the Ministries of Agriculture, Labour, Social Affairs, Youth and Sports, Defense and Maritime Affairs.

This report will devote more space to the qualifications issued by these ministries than to certification procedures involving the recognition of qualifications by the respective occupational branches; whilst the latter is still on a fairly small scale it provides an important pointer to the development of the activities of the two sides of industry in this field (see page 10).

* * *

"Titre" or "Diplôme" (certificate or diploma): as a matter of semantics the two terms as interchangeable. By convention, however, the term "diplôme" is generally reserved for qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education, and the term "titre" is applied to all other qualifications with the exception of those issued by the Ministries of Health and Youth and Sports.

PART 1

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES: GENERAL PRINCIPLES[5]

Access to occupations and certification

Among the various national qualifications, some are required for the exercise of the related profession or occupation. This is the case for assistant social workers, nurses, child care workers, physical education and sports teachers and certain maritime occupations.

Details are given below of the respective powers of the various bodies and authorities involved (e.g. the public authorities, workers' and employers' representatives, and representatives of the various occupational sectors).

In addition, we shall examine the bodies concerned, their role and the certification procedures adopted.

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5 On the following page the arrangements for establishing certification procedures in the technical training sector are shown in tabular form.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES IN THE TECHNICAL TRAINING SECTOR IN FRANCE (FROM LEVEL V TO LEVEL III)

Originating body or authority	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Labour	Ministries of Commerce and Crafts, Health, Youth and Sports, Defence, Maritime Affairs	Training bodies (including universities) or firms	Occupational sectors
Technical consultation: body or procedure	Joint Consultative Committee[1]	Joint Consultative Committee	Joint Consultative Committee	Within each Ministry with representatives of occupation in question		Within the relevant Joint Committee on Employment (where one exists)
Consultation prior to official validation		Committee on the Approval of Technical Training Qualifications, for approved qualifications only[2]	Committee on the Approval of Technical Training Qualifications			
Official validation decision	Ministry of Education	National certificates: Ministers of Education and Agriculture; Other qualifications: Minister of Labour and Vocational Training (delegated by Prime Minister)	Minister of Labour and Vocational Training (delegated by Prime Minister)	Minister of Labour and Vocational Training (delegated by Prime Minister)	Minister of Labour and Vocational Training (delegated by Prime Minister)	Relevant Joint Committee on Employment May request approval of qualifications
Nature of qualification issued	National certificates or diplomas	Approved qualifications and national certificates	Approved qualifications	Qualifications issued by public authorities, approved or otherwise	Approved qualifications	Recognised Technical or Vocational Certificates or other qualifications, or approved qualifications

1 The Joint Consultative Committees are bodies whose consultation is obligatory. Each one concerns a particular sector of economic activity and comprises representatives of employers, workers and the public authorities, besides experts in the related field.

2 In respect of the Ministry of Agriculture a distinction should be made between qualifications issued jointly with the Ministry of Education and approved qualifications.

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CHAPTER I

AREAS OF JURISDICTION AS REGARDS CERTIFICATION

For the most part, new qualifications are established within one of two specific systems differing as regards areas of jurisdiction and the certification procedures adopted. Qualifications may be established in two ways:

- completely new certificates or diplomas may be established by one or more ministries. The responsibility may be shared between several ministries as is the case, for example, as regards the Diploma in Community Work (DEFA) which was established jointly be the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Health and Family Affairs;

- alternatively, already existing qualifications may be recognized. This involves the approval of the related certificate or diploma, which then takes its place in the hierarchy of training levels.

The training in question may be provided by a ministry, a training body, a firm or an occupational sector.

In the first case the existing system of prior consultation is followed.

In the second case the qualifications in question are approved by a committee set up for this purpose (the Technical Committee on the Approval of Qualifications) where the related training lasts for at least three years (see page 14).

It should be noted that the validation of training/work experience courses by the respective occupational sectors represents a third possibility, though this procedure is more recent and less common.

Areas of jurisdiction as regards certificates, diplomas and other qualifications: historical background

Established in 1969 by the National Committee on Vocational Training Statistics, the nomenclature applying to the respective training levels and specializations was designed to provide an instrument for the official classification:

- of national qualifications, which are in principle the monopoly of the Ministry of Education;

- of other qualifications, for which the vocational training bodies would request recognition through approval procedures.

The Law of 4 August 1942 conferred a monopoly on the Ministry of Education as regards the issue of vocational qualifications at secondary education level through the organization of the related public examinations. The aim was to prevent the commercialization of certificates and diplomas and forestall any tendency for standards to deteriorate in the private sector.

At higher education level a much more flexible system was already in place at this time: under the Law of 10 July 1934, colleges of higher education were authorized to issue Qualified Graduate Engineer's Diplomas while the State technical colleges, colleges of business studies and other private schools recognized by the Ministry of Education as being of the same level issued qualifications on their own responsibility.

This monopoly on the part of the Ministry of Education existed only in principle. The Ministry of Labour issued vocational training certificates to AFPA (Association pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes - Adult Vocational Training Association) trainees on its own responsibility, while the recognition of vocational training qualifications by the labour market appeared to raise few problems given the favourable economic situation.

However, the economic downturn in 1966-67 led the Ministry of Labour to attempt to enhance the standing of the AFPA qualifications and position them in relation to the hierarchy of qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education. As a result of discussions on this subject in 1967-68 it was concluded that this measure should be extended to all qualifications accorded in the context of continuing training. The concept of approval was then formulated, enabling a national standing to be given to all qualifications.

This does not entail full equivalence, conferring the same rights as national certificates and diplomas, however, since employers are not obliged to recognized approved qualifications except where provided for under collective agreement.

The system finally adopted (approval) confers a degree of homogeneity on qualifications differing in various respects (e.g. in their content, the duration of the related training, the number of persons trained and the specializations involved).

Approved technical training qualifications appear on an official list; qualifications issued on the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, including higher education diplomas issued in the context of the Outline Law on Higher Education, are approved automatically.

The issue of engineer's diplomas is still governed by the 1934 Law; other qualifications are subject to the approval procedure whether issued by public or private establishments coming under the Ministries of Labour, Defence, Agriculture, etc, and whether they relate to initial or continuing training. Qualifications accorded by employers themselves to meet particular needs are not covered by the Centre INFFO study.

Finally, since 1986, the various occupational sectors have the option of establishing new vocational qualifications which may be acquired through the skilled training contracts scheme.

These qualifications are recognized under sectoral collective agreements or defined by the National Joint Committees on Employment.

They are complementary to other validation procedures and are listed in the classification tables.

Several sectors have already availed themselves of this opportunity and set up training programmes leading to vocational qualification certificates or attestations of technical skills. The principal sectors concerned are the following:

- the motor vehicle and motor vehicle, motor cycle and bicycle repair trades;
- the metals production and mining industries;
- the chemicals industry;
- the timber and wood industries;
- hydraulic, thermal, refrigeration and similar equipment installing firms.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPTION OF CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

Below we shall examine successively the certificates and diplomas established by the ministries, the qualifications issued by training bodies and approved by the Committee on the Approval of Technical Training Qualifications, and finally the qualifications recognized by the respective occupational sectors.

2.1 The Central Government authorities

Most ministries formulate, at central level, general rules applying to the certificates and diplomas for which they are responsible: i.e., rules governing access to the training leading to the qualification in question; the conditions governing access to the final examinations; the content of the related programmes; the skills required to obtain the diploma; the procedure for the issue of the diploma; the organization of the examinations and the responsibility therefor; the composition of the examining boards, etc.

In each ministry these questions are the responsibility of particular departments: at the Ministry of the Maritime Affairs, for example, the Maritime Training Bureau sets up new training courses while the establishment of qualifications and the related training contents and programmes is the responsibility of the Inspectorate General for Maritime Training.

At the Ministry of Defence new training courses are analyzed by specialists from the Military Training Authorities attached to each of the armed forces[6] and the Inspectorate (also attached to each of the armed forces) participates in the establishment of qualifications.

At the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a Department of Regulation and Training attached to the Sports Directorate is responsible for these questions.

2.2 The training bodies

The training bodies are free to establish any training courses they think are appropriate. If they wish to obtain national recognition of their qualifications, they must submit an application for approval. This procedure will be described below (paragraph 3.2).

2.3 The occupational sectors

The various occupational sectors set up training/work experience courses leading to qualifications recognized by collective agreement in cases where they consider that existing certificates and diplomas do not fully cover their requirements.

Recognition of the qualifications thus established may be obtained in one of two different ways:

- either they may be incorporated in a list drawn up by the National Joint Committee on Employment of the sector concerned, implying recognition by the sector at national level;
- or the sector in question may submit an application for their approval.

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[6] The Navy, the Air Force and the Army.

CHAPTER III

CONSULTATION

3.1 Consultation of the Joint Committees and other bodies

As in the case of other administrative decisions the establishment of diplomas is preceded by extensive consultations: the system is a complex one.

The types of consultative bodies involved vary according to the ministry concerned: Joint Consultative Committees in the case of the Ministries of Education, Agriculture and Labour; and specialized committees or councils for the other ministries.

3.1.1. The Joint Consultative Committees

The Joint Consultative Committees were established in 1948, their tasks being subsequently modified by Ministerial Orders in 1972 and 1983.

Their general field of competence relates to the formulation of technical and vocational qualifications; representing the two sides of industry in this area, their consultation is obligatory.

Up to the present only three ministries have set up Consultative Committees: the Ministry of Agriculture (only one Committee is active at the present time), the Ministry of Labour (which has set up four) and the Ministry of Education, which at present has seventeen such committees.

The Committees are quadripartite, comprising equal numbers of representatives of employers and workers, representatives of the public authorities and leading experts in their respective fields. The Committees include:

- a group of employers (ten persons) representing the trade organizations most directly concerned by the Committee's particular field. Seats are attributed to the respective organizations by decision of the Minister, and the organizations themselves appoint their representatives;

- a group of workers' representatives (ten persons); one seat is attributed to each of the representative trade unions at national level;

- a group of representatives of the public authorities including representatives of the Ministries concerned, the Education Inspectorate, the CEREQ (Centre d'étude et de recherche sur les qualifications - Centre for Research on Qualifications) and the AFPA (Association pour information professionnelle des adultes - Adult Vocational Training Association);

- a group of experts (eleven seats) including representatives of teachers' unions, associations of students' parents, the Standing Conference of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Standing Conference of Chambers of Trades, and one member representing the technical training counsellors.

These counsellors, who are active in the trades concerned (e.g. craftsmen, heads of firms, etc),

provide assistance to the Ministry of Education on an unpaid basis; in particular, they act as chairmen of the examining boards. The Committees are supported by a permanent secretariat.

The chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Joint Consultative Committees sit on an Inter-trade Consultative Committee, together with representatives of the various ministries.

A standing group comprising six representatives of employers, workers and the public authorities and three experts has the task of discussing and delivering an opinion on all problems concerning technical and vocational training. The Joint Committees' work of formulating and updating qualifications comprises four phases:

1. preliminary work based on an analysis of the labour market situation is carried out to determine the characteristics of a qualification which would correspond most precisely to the stated requirements. The request regarding the new qualification may originate from the education system itself or from outside sources (e.g. occupational sectors, firms, etc);

2. a profile of the related occupational activities is established, involving an analysis, looking five or ten years ahead, of the main tasks entailed in the jobs likely to be performed by future holders of the qualification;

3. a qualification profile is formulated, which involves identifying the skills, knowledge and knowhow corresponding to the profile of the related occupational activities;

4. validation procedures are specified and the regulatory aspects of the certificate are defined; this work is carried out on the authority of the departments of the ministry responsible for the establishment of the certificate.

3.1.2 Representatives of the occupational sectors in other ministries

In all other ministries representatives of the occupational sectors are consulted following a proposal from the central departments of the ministries concerned. These representatives meet in a variety of bodies:

- the National Council on Community Education, in respect of the establishment of qualifications by the Directorate for Youth, Co-operatives and the like of the Ministry of Youth and Sports;

- the National Committee on Employment and training in Physical Education and Sports or the Sports Federations recognized by the office of the Minister responsible for sports activities;

- the Specialized Committee on Maritime Training, which is consulted in the context of qualifications for which the Ministry of the Maritime Affairs is responsible;

- the various committees of the National Council for the Paramedical Professions (in respect of paramedical training) and the National Council for Social Work (in respect of training for social workers) are consulted at the Ministry of Health.

3.1.3 The Joint Committees on Employment and the National Joint Committees on Employment

Set up in 1969, the Joint Committees on Employment comprise representatives of the employers' and trade union organizations. In 1970 and subsequently in 1976 they were entrusted with the task of compiling information on the employment situation and outlook and promoting training policy in the occupations and regions within their field of competence.

The National Joint Committees on Employment specify the vocational qualifications or training courses preparatory to the acquisition of technical training qualifications which they believe should be developed in the context of the skilled training contract scheme (1983 agreement). Since 1991 they also play a part in monitoring integration contracts relating to training/work experience courses.

3.2. Consultations prior to approval: the Committee on the Approval of Qualifications

The approval of a certificate or diploma involves its incorporation in a system of nomenclature in accordance with the level and type of qualification concerned.

In this way, certificates or diplomas submitted for approval by public or private bodies are validated by the public authorities and classified by training level and group of trades.

This procedure enables the transparency of the various training channels offered at national level to be improved and ensures the quality and soundness of training courses leading to an approved qualification. Further, by classifying the qualifications issued under the auspices of the ministries concerned in addition to others relating to the various groups of activities covered by the INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques - National Institute for Statistical and Economic Studies) nomenclature, it provides - through reference to recognized standards - "bridges" between the public and private sectors.

The Committee on the Approval of Technical Training Qualifications, which was set up in 1971, has a consultative role; after examining applications submitted, it issues an opinion regarding the approval of the respective qualifications at an appropriate level. An approval decision is then taken by the Minister of Labour on the delegated authority of the Prime Minister.

The Committee has a tripartite structure, comprising representatives of the public authorities (one from each ministry concerned with vocational training), the employers (five representatives of employers' organizations) and the trade union organizations (also five representatives).

Since 1991, part of the procedure has been decentralized - i.e. transferred to the jurisdiction of the Prefect and Vocational Training Office of the region in question. This measure concerns the referral and examination of applications; approval decisions continue to be made at central level.

Certificates and diplomas issued by the various ministries and approved by the Committee on the Approval of Qualifications

The following four different cases may be noted:

1. in the case of the Ministry of Education, qualifications are approved automatically;

2. certain ministries systematically apply for the approval of all their certificates and diplomas; this procedure is followed by the Ministry of Labour, the Directorate for Health of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Defence in respect of technical training qualifications.

   In the case of advanced level qualifications the Ministry of Defence applies for equivalence with university diplomas; this latter case relates to technical training provided for virtually all non-commissioned officers, whatever their initial training level. Almost 400 certificates have been approved in this way.

   The principle of applying for approval in these cases may be explained by the relatively short careers of officers (under the regulations, some officers can take retirement after 15 years' service) and the need, in connection with their subsequent retraining for other occupations, to provide them with qualifications of an adequate level in civilian life. The two ministries in the lead as regards applications for the approval of their qualifications are the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Defence;

3. certain ministries seek approval only for some of their certificates and diplomas: for example, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs has obtained approval solely for the Captain's Certificate, first and second class, while in the case of the Ministry of Social Affairs, only certain qualifications issued by the Directorate for Social Action have been approved.

   The decision to seek approval for a given qualification appears to be motivated by the need to obtain recognition on the labour market; applications for approval have nothing to do with the level of the qualification concerned;

4. certain ministries do not seek approval for their qualifications; an example is the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in respect of its community work qualifications.

The approval procedure

A body seeking approval for a qualification, whether a ministry, training body, firm or occupational sector, submits an application to the Committee on the Approval of Qualifications.

The competent authority (Ministry, Regional Prefect, Chairman of the competent Regional Council or Regional Director of Education) entrusts the examination of the application to an independent expert.

The analysis of the application relates to certain detailed points concerning the qualification to which the course leads, the body providing the training, the organization and content of the training, the methods and facilities used, the means of access for trainees and the level required for admission, the teaching staff and, finally, trainees' job and career prospects.

The matter is then referred back to the Committee on the Approval of Qualifications.

CHAPTER IV

THE VALIDATING AUTHORITIES

4.1 The establishment of new qualifications

National diplomas or certificates

Only the minister or ministers concerned by the field of application of the certificate or diploma in question is or are empowered to sign the orders determining the general conditions applying to the qualifications for which he (or they) is responsible.

For example, the Minister of Health and Social Security and the State Secretary for Social Action and Rehabilitation were co-signatories of the Order relating to the Nursing Auxiliary's Certificate.

Other qualifications

A body, firm or occupational sector which establishes a qualification is free to declare its existence.

In such cases no official certification by a third party takes place. It should be noted that in the respective occupational sectors the decision is endorsed by the relevant Joint Committee on Employment (cf paragraph 3.1.3).

The qualification is then recognized either on the labour market in general or within the occupational sector concerned.

4.2 The approval of existing qualifications

In such cases the Minister of Labour takes a decision regarding the approval of the qualification on the delegated authority of the Prime Minister.

CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS APPROVED (1980-1992)

Year	Level of qualification approved						
	1	2	3	4	5	5a	Total approvals
1980	19	13	99	453	1 459	30	2 073
1981	8	12	12	19	29		80
1982			8	17	56	2	63
1983			9	8	28		45
194	2	1	19	89	21		132
1985		1	13	9	10		33
1876	1	4	18	13	17		53
1987	3	2	13	14	9		41
1988	1	11	56	12	9		89
1989	1	13	16	37	27		94
1990	2	14	31	14	37		98
1991	4	12	19	9	19		63
1992	5	25	37	26	39	1	133
Total	46	108	350	720	1 740	33	2 997

Source: Centre INFFO data bank.

PART TWO

ACCESS TO CETIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS: QUALIFICATION PROFILES, TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS AND FORMS OF TRAINING

In this part of the study we shall be concerned only with certificates and diplomas issued on the responsibility of ministries with jurisdiction in the area of training, whether the former are approved or not.

CHAPTER I

ACCESS TO QUALIFICATIONS: CONDITIONS FOR ACCESS AND CONTENT OF THE TRAINING COURSES

1.1. Conditions for access to qualifications

A wide variety of situations exist, depending on the validating body. In the simplest case (e.g. Ministry of Education or Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry), access to the entire range of qualifications is open to all candidates, whether they are following initial or continuing training, or are apprentices or "independent" candidates[7].

It should be noted that the Advanced Vocational Certificate (Ministry of Education or Ministry of Agriculture) is specific to continuing training.

Candidates wishing to acquire a Ministry of Labour qualification may apply as "independent" candidates, but must follow an AFPA condensed course module. It may be noted that Ministry of Labour qualifications are available only to employees or job-seekers aged over 17, i.e. in the context of continuing training.

In other cases, preparatory training is required for access to qualifications (for example, those issued by the Social Action Directorate, the Ministry of Defence and most of those issued by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs).

Submission to a selection procedure may also be required for access to preparatory training courses; for example, access to training courses organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs is obtained via a competitive entry examination, while entrants to AFPA courses undergo a guidance and assessment procedure[8] and tests are required for admission to certain Ministry of Agriculture training courses.

Conditions for access generally relate to criteria regarding age, training level, experience or

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[7] For Ministry of Agriculture qualifications, however, for access to a continuing training qualification the candidate must be sponsored by a training centre.

[8] This procedure comprises an assessment of candidates' vocational skills and psychotechnical tests (to evaluate skills and aptitudes), supplemented if necessary by an instructor's assessment in cases where a given level of accomplishment is required.

employment situation[9].

There is no general rule governing the conditions for access to qualifications: for example, no minimum educational level is required for admission to the training courses or examinations relating to the Sports Instructor's Certificate, stage I, issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Taking account of work experience

In the Ministries of Agriculture, Social Affairs and Youth and Sports work experience is taken into account to ease training requirements or dispense with practical training periods for candidates; however, the assessment procedures stipulated in the legislation are adhered to.

In some cases experience may be required under the conditions for admission to preparatory training courses[10].

Finally, experience may also be taken into account to facilitate candidates' admission to certain training courses. For example, in the Ministry of Social Affairs a special procedure for the validation of candidates' experience and qualifications is provided for, to facilitate the admission[11] to nursing studies of candidates not holding the Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

Under recent legislation (the Law of July 1992 and a Ministerial Order of March 1993) work experience may be taken into account for access to technical and vocational qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education. These provisions waive certain requirements in respect of credit units or tests for candidates with five years' work experience.

"Bridges" between qualfications

Provision is rarely made for "bridges" between qualifications issued by different bodies. Most often, other ministries recognize the levels of certain qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education[12], but the reverse is not the case.

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9 Training courses for the Family Helper's Certificate issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs are only accessible to workers in employment.

10 Experience is required for access to the Community Education/Youth Work Technical Assistant's Certificate (Level IV) and the Certificate in Community and Youth Work issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and also for certain qualifications issued by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs.

11 Based on candidates' work experience and continuing training record (five years' experience are required, or three years' of work in the health and social sector).

12 For example, holders of the Upper Secondary Leaving Certificate (General) can enrol for courses leading to the Advanced Agricultural Technician's Certificate, while under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, holders of a University Diploma of Technology are exempted from the training requirements relating to the Certificate in Community Work.

Where such "bridges" exist, they mainly relate to qualifications belonging to the same training channel - i.e. within the same group of trades.

1.2. Programmes and qualification profiles

Two different cases may be distinguished, corresponding in a sense to two different stages in the thinking about qualifications:

- either qualifications are defined in terms of programmes and disciplines (Ministry of Defence, Directorate for Health of the Ministry of Social Affairs[13], Ministry for Youth and Sports);

- or they are defined on the basis of training or job profiles, in close liaison with an analysis of the related trades (Social Action Directorate, Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Labour).

The Ministries of Education and Agriculture have established a system of qualification profiles.

These profiles specify the capacities, skills and knowledge required for the acquisition of a given qualification and, consequently, for the exercise of the related activity. They are applicable irrespective of access routes and means of assessment of the candidate's achievement.

About three years ago the Joint Consultative Committees developed a procedure for establishing profiles of the skills and capacities required for the respective occupational activities. Following a study of the desirability of establishing the certificate or diploma in question, this constitutes a very important stage, enabling the qualification to be designed on the basis of an analysis of the trade and the related job requirements. A method for generalizing this procedure has now been established.

Whether based on programmes or profiles, the content of most certificates or diplomas is uniform nation-wide. However, a certain number of exceptions exist:

- among the Ministry of Labour qualifications, "regional" options are available for certain specializations: for example, roofing (which involves slate roofing in the North of the country and tiling in the South) and farm machinery repair work (e.g. repair of machinery used in wine growing);

- certain qualifications issued by the Ministry of Agriculture comprise regional options; in such cases, credit units adapted to regional or employment requirements (UCAREs) are issued.

  These credit units are designed by the training centres with reference to local conditions under the supervision of the regional training and development departments of the regional Directorate for Agriculture and Forestry. In the case of qualifications for which no UCAREs are issued, part of the certificate and the related assessment can be adapted

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[13] At the Directorate for Health, training courses are organized on the basis of programmes: only the Nursery Nurse's course, in which evaluation is effected through continuous monitoring, is organized on the basis of skill profiles.

to regional requirements;

- supplementary training courses of which the content is established by the regional education authorities with reference to regional economic requirements are also organized at local level.

The diversity of situations and training establishments, besides the contribution made by in-firm training, are taken into account in the procedures for the award of diplomas.

CHAPTER II

TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS AND TEACHING METHODS

2.1 Training establishments

The qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education are available via all types of training. In most cases, training leading to qualifications issued by the other ministries is given in centres approved by the latter. For example:

- training for qualifications issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports is given by training bodies approved by the Regional Directorate for Youth and Sports. Similarly, training for the Sports Instructor's Certificate (BEES) is primarily given in establishments independent of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, i.e. the 22 CREPS (Centres régionaux d'éducation physique et sportive - Regional Centres for Physical Education and Sports) and the five State schools and institutes under the authority of the Ministry. Training establishments are approved by the Regional Director for Youth and Sports;

- training for qualifications issued by the Ministry of Labour is given either in State training centres, which are approved automatically, or in private vocational training centres which are either approved by the Employment Office in respect of each individual training course or covered by a regional agreement equivalent to approval during its period of validity.

2.2. Forms of training

Encouraged by the public authorities, the vocational training bodies are experimenting with new forms of training: training/work experience schemes, modular training, training embracing new technologies, and distance learning. Some of the most significant of these forms of training will be discussed below.

The autonomy of teaching staff

Under the Ministry of Agriculture, teaching staff enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy, structuring the annual timetable fixed under the programmes and organizing the mix of subjects in a multidisciplinary context as they see fit. Courses are considered to be multidisciplinary to the extent that the programmes are not defined in terms of disciplines. Training modules correspond to objectives comprising at least two disciplines.

Teaching staff are also responsible for 50% of the assessment procedures, since they are entrusted with the continuous assessment of students during their training.

The development of training / work experience schemes

Many ministries attach considerable importance to practical work, either from tradition because the training courses for which they are responsible are primarily vocational in character (Directorate for Social Action, Ministries for Youth and Sports, Agriculture and Maritime Affairs) or as a result of recent policy decisions.

Training courses for which the Social Action Directorate is responsible make systematic use of the training/work experience system, a significant part being devoted to practical training: one year's practical training is required for family helpers, while almost 40% of the course for assistant social workers is devoted to practical training and four weeks of practical work is required for candidates for the CAFAMP (Certificat d'aptitude aux fonctions d'aide médico-psychologique - Medical and Psychological Care Assistant's Certificate), who are already in employment at the outset. In training courses for the paramedical professions, about half the time is devoted to practical work.

All Ministry of Agriculture qualifications - including the future Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate (Technology), to be introduced in the 1993-94 school year - provide for a period of practical training in a firm.

In Ministry of Defence courses, following a period of "general" training, trainees put their knowledge into practice during a period of practical work of which the duration increases with the level of qualification sought.

In Ministry of Education courses the predominant form of training is full-time classroom tuition - at least as regards initial training; however, study for the Vocational Upper Secondary Leaving Certificate and - since the Ministerial Order of 19 September 1992 - for the Vocational Studies Certificate (BEP) and the Vocational Proficiency Certificate (CAP) is given on the training/work experience system (theoretical training in the classroom, practical training in a firm).

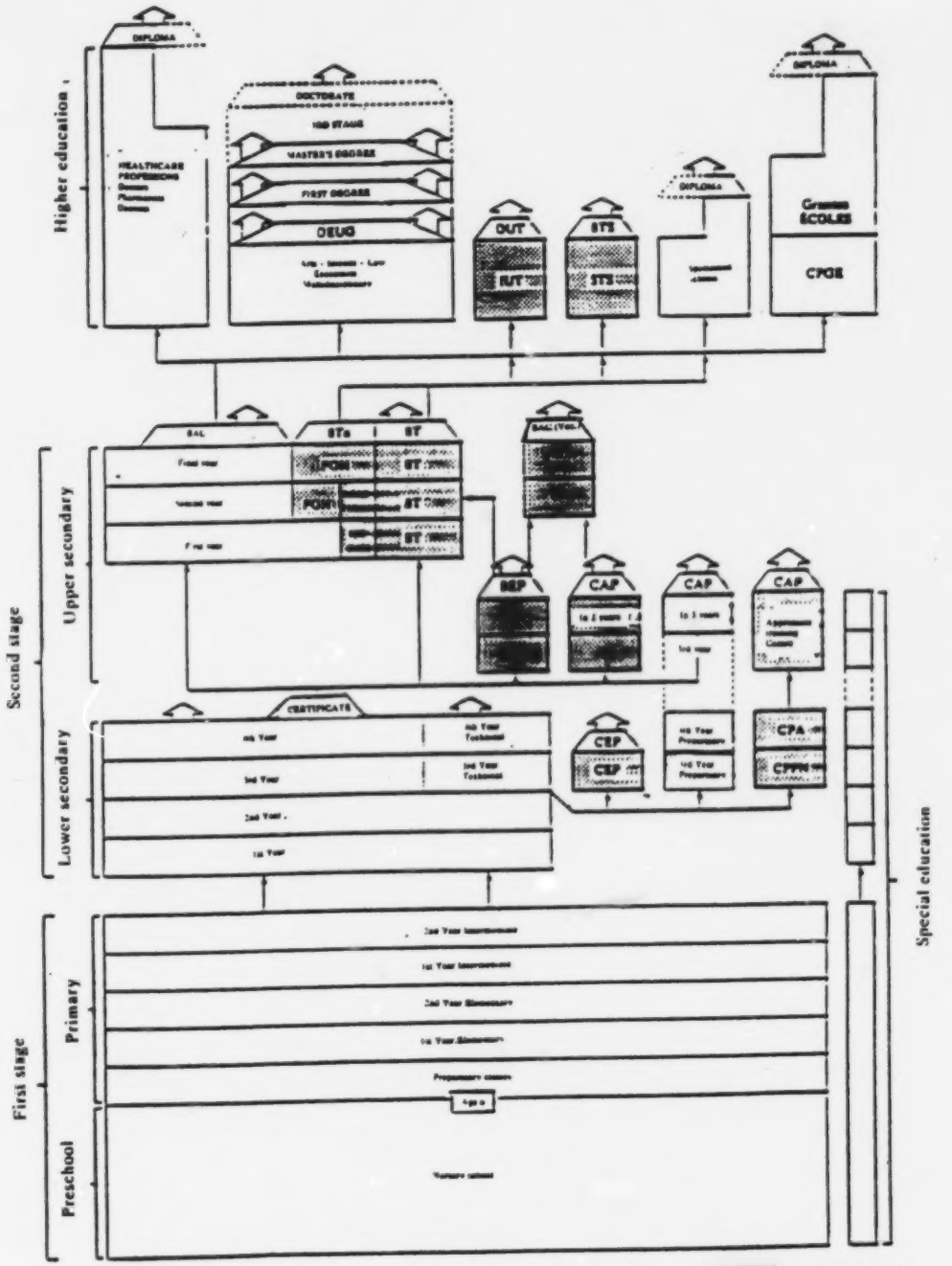
Modular training and the credit units system

Training courses for Ministry of Labour qualifications are organized either on traditional lines or in the form of modules enabling students to acquire qualifications in progressive stages. In 1992, 80% of the certificates or diplomas could be acquired in the latter way. Under the modular system, access to training modules enables both vocational skills and theoretical knowledge to be recognised.

In this way, candidates enrolling for training courses may be exempted - following an assessment interview - from taking the modules whose content they have already covered. This is at present the case with 5-20% of candidates, according to their specialization.

In Ministry of Agriculture courses, the training modules also relate to specific profiles and correspond to objectives.

At the same time, an increasing number of Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education qualifications can be acquired through the credit units system; we shall return to this point in the section devoted to assessment.



* each box represents one year of study except for preschool education (age 2-5) and higher education.

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Distance learning

The Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Labour and - to a lesser extent - Defence have set up correspondence courses or distance learning systems.

Despite the development of new forms of training, however, traditional methods still hold sway. The sole form of training organized by the Ministries of Social Affairs and Defence consists of full-time tuition for groups of students. In Social Action Directorate courses, individualized monitoring is effected through the use of a report book during both theoretical training and practical work.

2.3 Ways forward within training channels

In general, practically no means exists for transiting between different ministries' training channels. The only bridges available, to which no restrictions apply, are between courses organized by the same ministry.

The organization of the training system established by the Directorate for Social Action makes provision for trainees to progress within the training channel for social workers; bridges between the various courses are therefore provided. Recognition of students' qualifications and/or experience leads to an easing of the training requirements but does not dispense with the need to pass the final examinations.

In Ministry of Education training courses, the higher the level of the related qualification the greater is the emphasis placed on the general education aspect.

For example, the Vocational Proficiency Certificate is a qualification attesting to the holder's capacity to exercise a given trade; the Vocational Studies Certificates, on the other hand, are structured around broader groups of skills to enable the holder to develop the capacity to adapt which will be required during his career. The qualifications are also designed with a view to enabling students to progress within a given training channel.

PART THREE

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS FOR THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS: COMPOSITION OF THE EXAMINING BOARDS

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND ORGANIZATION OF ASSESSMENT

1.1 Assessment procedures

The situation varies greatly between one ministry and another; even within the same ministry a variety of assessment procedures relating to the various certificates and diplomas may be employed.

Different ministries may employ different validation procedures for the same qualification (and may also change from one procedure to another). In this way conformity with the regulatory provisions applying to national certificates and diplomas may be reconciled with individual strategies for their acquisition.

The procedures for the issue of diplomas are based:

- on final examinations held on completion of training courses; this, the traditional procedure, continues to be the most common;

- on the continuous assessment of skills, which is possible in a certain number of approved establishments practising the so-called "success-oriented" training method. Continuous assessment is a progressive evaluation system.

Assessment procedures

The most widely used assessment procedure is based on the final examination on completion of the training course. However, procedures differ widely and the table below sets out the systems adopted by each of the various ministries.

Ministry or Department	Final examination	Continuous or periodic assessment	Credit units	Mixed procedures
Social action	Yes, mainly	Yes - report book		
Health	Yes, mainly	Solely for nursery nurses		
Agriculture	Yes	Yes, during initial training (50% of course)	Solely in case of continuous assessment + 2/3 of Advanced Vocational Certificates and 3/4 of Vocational Proficiency Certificates	Modular courses
Defence	Yes	Yes		
Education	Yes	Yes	Yes, for continuing training courses	Yes
Maritime Affairs	Yes			
Sports	Yes	Yes		Yes
Youth	Yes			
Labour	Yes	Yes		
Crafts	Yes			

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- this assessment is decisive since the Examining Board will issue the certificate (in whole or in part) on the basis of the results submitted by the teaching staff and in the light of the corresponding profile;

- on the periodic assessment system, as introduced by the Ministry of Education in connection with the issue of Vocational Upper Secondary Leaving Certificates in parallel with the introduction of periods of in-firm training in initial training courses. Assessments take place at several stages during the course and concern only part of the examination since they are always associated with specific final tests.

  This system enables the diversity of situations, training media and establishments to be taken into account, in addition to the contribution made by in-firm training. Further, within the context of national qualification profiles, it enables validation procedures to be adapted to the situation on local labour markets;

- on the credit units system: this procedure, which was introduced on an experimental basis during the 1960s, is consistent with continuous or periodic assessment and specific final examinations. Independent candidates or trainees attending establishments not empowered to award credit units via the continuous assessment system must participate in specific final examinations.

  At the present time the majority of vocational qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education can be acquired by this means which, however, is still reserved for continuing training students. The Ministry of Education is at present considering the possibility of extending this facility to initial training.

1.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment procedures mainly take the form of written or oral tests aimed at assessing candidates' knowledge and skills.

Several different trends may be noted:

- the attempt to obtain a balance between theoretical (general and technical training) and practical tests;

- the results of in-firm training periods during training courses are taken into account by the Ministries of Defence, Social Affairs, Labour and Education;

- priority is given to entry to the labour market by the Ministry of Labour.

Despite the importance of final examinations, some ministries lay emphasis on the periodic assessment of candidates during training. This procedure for awarding qualifications is gaining ground: for example, over two-thirds of the Advanced Vocational Certificates and more than three-quarters of the Vocational Proficiency Certificates issued by the Ministry of Agriculture are awarded via the credit units system.

1.3 The organization of, and responsibility for, assessment

While training programmes and means of assessment (e.g. type of assessment, dates of examinations, etc) are most often fixed by the central - or in some cases regional - authorities, assessment procedures are organized at local level.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has transferred responsibility for the organization of examinations relating to Level V qualifications such as the CAFAD and the CAFAMP to the regional Directorates for Health and Social Action. Finally, the examinations for the CAFM, the DEES and the DETS are organized by the Regional Education Office.

For qualifications in the paramedical field, the regional Directorate for Health and Social Action select the written tests and fix the timetable for the examinations.

In respect of the practical tests, the regional Directorates merely arrange the schedules for the tests, which - for nurses, for example - are given in centres other than those in which the candidates are following their training.

Under the Ministry of Agriculture, assessment is carried out by approved training centres under the supervision of the Examining Board; the centres are responsible for establishing the nature of the examinations and their timetable, the objectives assessed, the methods of marking and other procedures. The centres must submit the content of the examinations to the Examining Board for its approval.

Under the Ministry of Education the subjects of the examinations and their timetables, and the dates for meetings of the Examining Board are fixed by the Regional Director of Education or the District Education Officer[14] (the Director of Education at Département level) on the Regional Director's delegated authority. The Inspector for Technical Education has the task of supervising the design of the examinations and their organization and ensuring that they are conducted in a proper manner.

In the particular case of the Advanced Technician's Certificate, the subjects are set at national level but the regional education authorities are responsible for the conduct of the examinations and the processing of the candidates, under the control of an Inspector General.

Each regional education authority possesses an examination service; the tests are designed by teachers, in some cases with the help of representatives of the trades concerned.

In the context of the credit units system, the regional authorities are gradually establishing a network of validation centres. These centres offer certification procedures adapted to the target

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[14] For the implementation of education policy at local level, France is divided into 26 "Académies" (regional education authorities) administered by the Office of the Regional Director for Education. The "Académies" do not correspond precisely with regional administrative boundaries: for example, the Ile-de-France, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Côte d'Azur each have two "Académies". At "Département" level the District Education Officer is responsible. Where the number of candidates is small, two or more "Académies" may be grouped together.

groups and hold examinations on several occasions during the year; this enables the diversity of training channels, students' progress and the timing of the programmes to be taken more effectively into account. These arrangements are designed to meet the requirements regarding the validation of vocational qualifications laid down by the Law of 20 July 1992.

CHAPTER II

THE COMPOSITION OF THE EXAMINING BOARDS

The Examining Boards are appointed by the Prefect of the region concerned, the Regional Director for Education, or the Regional Director for the ministry in question, who most often takes the chair

With certain exceptions (e.g. the Ministries of Maritime Affairs and Defence) the Examining Boards are joint bodies, including representatives of the public authorities, the trade in question, the employers and - in certain cases - the training bodies.

Ministry of Social Affairs

Social action Directorate

The Examining Boards are appointed by the Prefect of the region on a proposal by the Regional Director for Health and Social Action, who takes the chair, or by the Regional Director of Education; in the latter case the Board is chaired by the Principal Inspector for Technical Training (for the CAFME, the DEES and the DEST).

The Boards comprise representatives of the trade in question, the employers, the training centres and their staff, and the public authorities.

Ministry of Health

In respect of Level III qualifications the Examining Boards are nominated by the Prefect of the region on a proposal by the Regional Director for Health and Social Action. They include the Regional Health Inspector, who takes the chair, representatives of the sector in question, doctors - whose specialization varies according to the nature of the diploma - and teachers involved in training courses of the level concerned.

In the case of Level V qualifications, the Boards are appointed by the Prefect of the "Département" concerned on a proposal by the Département Health Inspector, who takes the chair. The membership of the Boards is structured on the same principles.

Ministry of Agriculture

The Regional Director for Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for the organization and conduct of assessment procedures. He appoints the members of the Examining Boards, which are chaired by a category A official. The Boards comprise equal numbers of:

- teachers and vocational training instructors in the field concerned, with the exception of teachers involved in the course in question;
- representatives of the occupational sector concerned, both employers and workers.

Ministry of Defence

The Examining Boards consist of teachers attached to the Ministry and the military training

authorities.

Ministry of Education

Validation procedures are the responsibility of the Regional Director of Education. Whatever the training level and the qualification concerned, candidates are never examined by their own teachers; it should be noted, however, that in the case of continuous monitoring or monitoring during training, provision is made for account to be taken of assessments by teachers and instructors.

In the case of the Vocational Proficiency Certificate and the Vocational Studies Certificate, the Examining Boards are appointed by the Regional Directors of Education or, by delegated authority, the District (Département) Education Officers. They are chaired by a Technical Training Counsellor or, where none is available, by a member of the Board who is a teacher in a public establishment. The Boards include equal numbers of teachers and representatives of the trade in question, parity also being ensured between employers and workers.

Ministry of Youth and Sports

Youth

In the case of the Community Education/Youth Work Technical Assistant's Certificate (BEATEP), the Minister for Youth and Sports appoints members of the regional Examining Boards for a period of three years. The Boards are chaired by the appropriate Regional Director for Youth and Sports and include representatives of the public authorities, the training bodies, representative employers' organizations in the fields of community education and youth work and trade union organizations representative at national level.

In principle teachers do not correct the work of their own students, assessment being based on the principle of anonymity.

Sports

The Regional Directors for Youth and Sports appoint qualified Examining Boards on the Minister's delegated authority. They also chair the Examining Boards and issue the Sports Instructor's Certificate (BEES), Stage 1 and Stage 2.

The Boards include a member of the Inspectorate for Youth, Sports and Leisure Activities and one or more specialists involved in the training of sports officials.

Ministry of Maritime Affairs

The Minister appoints members of the General Committee on Examinations. Where Ministry of Education qualifications are concerned[15] representatives of the trade in question are appointed

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15 In the aquaculture sector: a Vocational Proficiency Certificate and a Vocational Studies Certificate in Shellfish Farming and an Advanced Vocational Certificate in Aquaculture.

to the Examining Boards in accordance with the Ministry's usual practice.

In the case of other qualifications issued by the Office of the State Secretary for Maritime Affairs, the Examining Boards are primarily made up of maritime training inspectors and teachers.

Ministry of Labour

The Examining Boards are joint bodies. The District Directors of Labour and Employment ask members of the District subcommittees (representatives of employers and workers) to participate in the Examining Boards.

A minimum of two representatives from each group is thought necessary - especially for marking; however, the marking continues to be valid in the absence of one of the parties. Participation by representatives of the two sides of industry varies from one "Département" to another.

AFPA (Adult Vocational Training Association) personnel may carry out a preliminary marking of the tests at the Board's request.

The commerce and crafts sector

In the case of the Master Craftsman's Certificate, the Examining Boards include heads of firms, employees and representatives of the Ministry of Education. In the case of the EFAA[16], the Examining Boards are set up by the Chairman of the appropriate Chamber of Trades and consist of a general board which selects the general education tests and a specialized board for each trade which selects the practical and technical tests.

- In the merchant marine sector: a Merchant Seaman's Vocational Proficiency Certificate and Marine Engine-room Certificate (also valid in the sea fishing sector).

- In the sea fishing sector: a Sea Fisherman's Vocational Proficiency Certificate and a Vocational Studies Certificate in the Operation of Fishing Vessels.

[16] Examen de fin d'apprentissage artisanal (Apprenticeship Final Examination).

CHAPTER III

WHO ISSUES CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS IN THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES?

Education	The Regional Director of Education
Labour, employment and vocational training	The Prefect, on behalf of the Minister
Agriculture	The Regional Director for Agriculture and Forestry
Defence	The Minister of Defence
Youth and sports	- BEATEP: Regional Director for Youth and Sports - DEFA: Regional Prefect on behalf of the Ministers of Health and Youth and Sports - BEES: Regional Director for Youth and Sports
Maritime affairs	Regional Director for Maritime Affairs, on the Minister's delegated authority
Social affairs - Health - Directorate for Health - Social Action	 Regional Prefect, on a proposal by the Regional Director for Health and Social Action The Regional Director, on behalf of the Minister of Social Affairs, except the CAFME, DEES and the DETS, which are issued by the Regional Director of Education.

CONCLUSIONS

PRESENT TRENDS

The French education system, marked by its bureaucratic origins, has up to now accorded a relatively modest role to trade circles in the formulation of certificates and diplomas and - especially - in decision-making.

The dominant position of the Ministry of Education's Joint Consultative Committees in the structure results from the predominance of State vocational training in the initial training system. C. Merlin stresses that the involvement of trade organizations in the formulation of qualifications results from a desire for compatibility between training and employment, which is vital given the exceptionally high unemployment rate among young people[17].

The development of systems of qualifications within the respective occupational sectors undoubtedly marks the beginning of a new trend in this area.

In the ministries examined, we noted that the need to renovate existing qualifications was felt. Little by little the architecture of the qualification systems is changing and the following trends are coming to light:

- a desire for greater permeability between the various qualifications relating to a given ministry's training channels;
- the gradual introduction of "bridges" between qualifications issued by different ministries;
- the organization of courses in modular form, which could eventually be transformed into a credit units system;
- in some cases training courses are increasingly being brought into line with university-type courses, enhancing the status of the resulting qualifications;
- the generalization of training/work experience schemes;
- the introduction of assessment in work situations and the study of validation procedures for skills acquired by individuals during working life;
- the development of new forms of training (e.g. experiments with distance learning leading to qualifications).

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17 C. Merlin, "La concertation éducation-économie dans la définition des qualifications et des diplômes; Les propositions du Haut Comité Education-Economie", HCEE Review, n° 13, 1991, pp 23-26.

Number of certificates and diplomas issued by each ministry, 1990-91 or 1991-92

Ministry	Level V	Level IV	Level III	Total
Agriculture[1]	CAPA: 9 600 BEPA: 15 300	BTA: 9 800 BAC (Agricultural & Technical): 1 330	BTSA: 6 000	41 955
Education[2]	CAP[3]: 274 343 BEP[4]: 156 543 Total: 430 886	BT: 8 348 BAC (Technical): 112 621 BAC (Vocational): 24 116 Total[5]: 145 085	BTS: 52 667 DUT[6]: 27 835 80 502	656 473
Youth and sports: - Youth - Sports		BEATEP: 468 (since 1986) BEES: c. 5 500	DEFA: 500-600	
Social Affairs - Health[7] - Social action[8]	Nursery school teachers: 2 308 Total: 3 682	CAFME: 1 254	Total: 16 701 Total: 5 160	19 009 10 096
Defence				2 000-3 000
Maritime Affairs Secretariat				800 candidates
Labour	In 1991, 5 330 examinations were organized and 43 000 candidates participated			
Crafts	Master Craftsman's Certificate (1989): 6 665 candidates entered for at least one course unit; 15/3% passed.			

1 Only qualifications obtained via initial training are included. Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 1991.

2 Statistics on education and training, Ministry of Education, Directorate for Evaluation and Forecasting, 1992.

3 Including CAPs and BEPs issued at "Département" level and qualifications obtained through the credit units system.

4 Including CAPs and BEPs issued at "Département" level and qualifications obtained through the credit units system.

5 Not including Advanced Vocational Certificates.

6 Not including continuing training qualifications.

7 Statistics drawn from "les écoles de formation aux professions de la santé en 1991-1992", n° 148, July 1992, SESI. The number of Nursing Auxiliary's Certificates issued is not given.

8 Statistics drawn from "Les écoles de formation aux professions de la santé en 1991-1992", n° 149, July 1992, SESI.

Abbreviations

The concept of "vocational competences" is defined in the glossary drawn up by CEDEFOP in July 1992. It should be noted that the French term "capacité" (capacity) incorporates the concept of "aptitude" defined in the same document.

AFPA	Association pour la formation professionnelle des adultes - Adult Vocational Training Association
BAC	Baccalauréat - Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate
BASE	Brevet d'aptitude à l'animation socio-éducative - Community Education/Youth Worker's Certificate
BEATEP	Brevet d'animateur technicien de l'éducation populaire et de la jeunesse - Community Education/Youth Work Technical Assistant's Certificate
BEES	Brevet d'Etat d'éducateur sportif - Sports Instructor's Certificate
BEP	Brevet d'études professionnelles - Vocational Studies Certificate
BP	Brevet professionnel - Advanced Vocational Certificate
BT	Brevet de technicien - Technician's Certificate
BTA	Brevet de technicien agricole - Agricultural Technician's Certificate
BTS	Brevet de technicien supérieur - Advanced Technician's Certificate
CAFAMP	Certificat d'aptitude aux fonctions d'aide médico-psychologique - Medical and Psychological Care Assistant's Certificate
CAFAD	Certificat d'aptitude aux fonctions d'aide à domicile - Family Helper's Certificate
CAFAS	Certificat d'aptitude aux fonctions d'aide-soignant - Nursing Auxiliary's Certificate
CAFM	Certificat d'aptitude aux fonctions de moniteur éducateur - Youth Leader/Teaching Auxiliary's Certificate
CEP	Certificate d'études primaires - Certificate of Primary Education
CEREQ	Centre d'études et de recherche des qualifications - Centre for Research on Qualifications
CHT	Commission d'homologation des titres et diplômes - Committee on the Approval of Qualifications
CPA	Classe préparatoire à l'apprentissage - Pre-apprenticeship class

CPC	Commissions professionnelles consultatives - Consultative Committees on Vocational Training
CPGE	Classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles - Preparatory classes for the "Grandes Ecoles" (specialized institutions of higher education)
CPPN	Classe préprofessionnelle de niveau - Pre-vocational class
CREPS	Centre régionaux d'éducation physique et sportive - Regional Centres for Physical Education and Sports
DEES	Diplôme d'Etat d'éducation spécialisé - State Diploma in Special School Teaching
DEFA	Diplôme d'Etat relatif aux fonctions d'animation - State Diploma in Community Work
DESS	Diplôme d'Etat de service social - State Diploma in Social Work
DEUG	Diplôme d'études universitaires générales - Diploma of Basic University Studies
DEUST	Diplôme d'études universitaires scientifiques et techniques - Diploma of University Studies in Science and Technology
DOM	Département d'outre-mer - Overseas "Département"
DRAF	Direction régionale de l'agriculture et de la forêt - Regional Directorate for Agriculture and Forestry
DRAJS	Direction régionale de la Jeunesse et des Sports - Regional Directorate for Youth and Sports
DRAM	Direction régionale des affaires maritimes - Regional Directorate for Maritime Affairs
DRASS	Direction régionale de l'action sanitaire et sociale - Regional Directorate for Health and Social Action
DUT	Diplôme universitaire technologique - University Diploma of Technology
EFAA	Examen de fin d'apprentissage artisanal - Craft Apprenticeship Final Examination
EREA	Ecoles régionales d'enseignement adapté - Regional Special Education Schools
ESEU	Examen spécial d'entrée à l'université - University Special Entrance Examination
GCA	Groupes de classes ateliers préqualifications - Special Education Workshop Classes
INSEE	Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques - National Statistical Office

IUT	Institut universitaire de technologie - College of Technology
SES	Section d'éducation spécialisée - Special Education Section
STS	Section de techniciens supérieurs - Classes for the Advanced Technician's Certificate
UCARE	Unités capitalisables d'adaptation régionale ou à l'emploi - Credit units adapted to regional or employment requirements

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In these publications the authors, after making brief reference to the characteristics of the general and vocational training systems in their countries, describe all aspects of how qualifications are certified:

- formulation and introduction of certificates, qualifications and diplomas: the relevant institutions, procedures, tripartite or joint consultation or decision-making commissions;
- access to qualifications: conditions, means, motives, channels;
- certification: aims, contents, means, procedures;
- usefulness, use, trends and problems

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